



New Jersey Pinelands Commission **PRESS RELEASE**

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Commission Concludes CMP Review: Issues Recommendations *Strategies and initiatives established following intensive, 18-month review of the CMP*

NEW LISBON, NJ - At its monthly meeting today, the Pinelands Commission passed a resolution establishing goals, strategies and initiatives to guide the Commission's resource protection efforts over the next five years. This action brings the Third Review of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) officially to a close and begins the implementation phase.

"The Third Review has been a tremendous success thanks to an open, cooperative process that gathered input from a multitude of individuals and organizations that are concerned with or impacted by Pinelands programs," said Commission Chairman James Florio. "The end result is a constructive set of strategies that will guide the Commission as it works to keep the Pinelands Plan viable and enhance its effectiveness in the face of changing conditions and new challenges."

The review officially got underway in January 2002 when Commission staff issued a progress report on the recent and historical accomplishments of Pinelands programs since CMP implementation in 1980. The report also provided exhaustive baseline data on Pinelands land-use planning and permitting activities. The report was followed by a series of four public panel discussions that brought together representatives of the environmental and conservation community, agriculture, business and industry, academia, local government, and as well as a host of legal, planning and other experts from the private, governmental and non-profit sectors. In addition, the Commission received extensive public comment throughout the process. The forums were then followed by two special Pinelands Commission meetings, in December and June, to consult with staff and direct the creation of strategies for achieving goals and objectives.

Today's vote by the Commission formally adopts a guidance document which outlines vision statements, goals and initiatives in three major topic areas: permanent land protection; Regional Growth Areas; and other issues, which includes water resources, wetlands, habitat protection, land uses, permitting, and enforcement.

"This document will guide the Commission as it tackles some of the emerging challenges of protecting the Pinelands," said John Stokes, Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission. "In the coming months and years, the Commission will be working with communities to engage in more creative and innovative community design and facility planning. The Commission will also be seeking ways to help towns to finance the costs of growth and control the pace of development."

Permanent land protection efforts will focus on preserving, protecting and managing critical ecological and agricultural lands through innovative techniques, regional and coordinated efforts and development of a region-wide priority system. The Commission plans to examine and identify new opportunities for techniques such as clustering as well as expansion of the Pinelands Development Credit program to help protect important lands outside of the current “sending” areas.

As part of the “other issues” recommendations, the Commission will be considering: developing design and management standards for golf courses; improving planning for and siting of schools; developing detailed survey protocols for threatened and endangered species; identifying opportunities for the re-use of wastewater; improving coordinated CMP enforcement efforts with municipalities; preventing uncontrolled use of ATVs, as well as other important objectives.

“The original Pinelands Protection Act called for periodic reviews of the CMP to ensure that it remains a ‘livable’ document,” added Florio. “I am confident that this effort will not only meet that mandate but exceed it by making the CMP more successful at facilitating smart growth and bolstering protection of Pinelands natural resources.”

The next step in the review process will be preparation of a summary document of the third review and establishing a schedule for follow-up and implementation of the strategies.

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